# SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

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Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

**The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor**
**Home: 269-983-2475**
**Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org**

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
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bradley717@gmail.com

Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

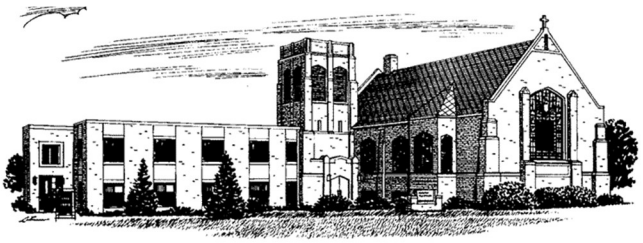
Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

**Typical Sunday at Saron:**
Fall, Winter and Spring (beginning Sept 11):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

Summer of 2023 (beginning June 4):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

*We hold in prayer:*
*The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,*
*Presiding Bishop, ELCA*
*The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the*
*North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA*
*The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI*

*Our Companion Synods:*
*Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras*
*Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea*
*Lutheran Church of Latvia*
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*



**PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR NOVEMBER 2022**

"Connecting with God…" We are hearing and reading that phrase often this Stewardship Season. As I've listened to the various ministry talks, read the devotions, seen the responses to our questions of the week, I am mindful of all the things that are part of Saron's ministry AND how much goes on behind the scenes of which folks might generally be unaware. And, there is for me the "tension" of not needing to know and the benefits of knowing. For example, this past Saturday, four of us from Saron attended the Synod's Disability Day in Portage. (Thank you, Kathi, Kathie, and Kathy, for joining me.) It was educational, inspiring, and sometimes challenging. How is it we extend the radical welcome of Jesus, which we are so passionate about? We've made great strides in aspects of our physical building but where can we enhance our worship, and other ministry activities, which would better include the needs of those with disabilities that are less visible? Not as a way of ministering to, but ministering with? You likely will notice some nuances happening in these next months. Perhaps the changes will be comfortable, perhaps not. Please, know this – I believe welcome and inclusion is part of who we are and for that I am grateful. It is part of our very fabric, across all areas. I truly believe the passion and the call is there. Sometimes we do it well and sometimes we fall short, but we do it together and with the Spirit's help.

Thanks to each and every one of you, as individuals and as a community, who join in this effort. It takes work; it brings joy as well as is done with joy, as together we "*joyfully share God's love for all!!!*" As our stewardship Bible verse theme reminds us, "We love because God first loved us." (1 John 4:19) It all starts with God.

-Pastor Joan

**Thanksgiving Worship**
**Tuesday, November 22 at 7pm**

# General Information

## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Watch weekly emails and door signage for any change in protocol. As of printing, masks are encouraged for those who feel so inclined but not required. Nursery workers and communion assistants will wear masks.

## OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

# Caring and Sharing

## IN OUR PRAYERS

**Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman;
**Ron Bolson** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman;
**Kathleen & Phillip Preston** are at Caretel in St. Joseph;
**Tom Taylor** is at Caretel in St. Joseph.

**Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!**

11/1 Suzy Kohs
11/2 Eric Burrow
11/2 Merrily Smith
11/4 Laurel Gacek
11/4 Laura Stark
11/4 Sterling Carter
11/7 Meredith Gacek
11/13 Carter Hohman
11/15 Coanne Hohman
11/17 Dawn Osgood
11/17 Marcus Roll
11/18 Mark Wedde
11/19 Brent Dipert
11/19 Tom Taylor
11/20 Christopher Gaspari
11/23 Ruth Ball
11/25 David Lundgren
11/27 Gene Embree
11/28 Emily Gaul
11/28 Melanie McCammon
11/30 Denise Cook

**Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!**

11/01 Kelli & Ryan Christman
11/11 Aaron & Betsy Becker
11/21 Deborah & Mark Vollmer
11/22 Susan & Patrick Blanchard
11/22 John & Kerrie Hoodlebrink
11/22 Walter & Sally Schmuhl

***"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"***

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

## CONGRATULATIONS

We welcomed
**Elizabeth Gaspari**
to God's table on
Sunday, October 2,
as she partook in her
first communion.
Congratulations,
Elizabeth!

# *No kidding, your help is needed . . . b-a-a-a-dly!*

Vulnerable communities in Africa are facing a "triple C" crisis as Conflict, COVID, and Climate change are causing widespread threats to lives and livelihoods. Hunger is rising with many countries and communities facing food insecurity. If these conditions continue, some countries and communities will move into the final phase of food insecurity: famine.

Strategies for dealing with the effects of "triple C" are focused on introducing regenerative agriculture practices – such as diversification of livestock and micro-dosing with manure – that improve soil health, increase productivity, build climate resilience, and reduce reliance on expensive synthetic fertilizers. Per Farm Africa (farmafrica.org), "Growing maize and legumes and **keeping goats, pigs, poultry, and bees** are all resilience mechanisms, which ensure that if one source of income fails, people have another to fall back on."

**How can you help?**

Last year during Advent, the people of Saron donated 21 goats, 17 pigs, 17 broods of 10 chicks each, and 24 honeybee colonies during our ELCA Good Gifts focus. Let's do it again, only more!

This year, from the beginning of Advent (November 27th) through Epiphany (January 6th), you will have the opportunity to make donations for an animal Christmas tree ornament that will allow the ELCA to purchase and deliver the animal(s) of your choice to where it (they) will do the most good. We are again focusing on just four animal ornaments, but not just for simplicity. These four are best for the environment and will provide the most help to struggling families:

*Goat – $50*
Goats can go where other animals can't, surviving in some of the world's most challenging terrain. Goat's milk provides nutrition for children and goats are quick to reproduce. The manure is also great for micro-dosing practices.

*Piglet – $30*
This little piggy couldn't be a bigger lifesaver. This gift provides natural fertilizer that helps crops grow tall and strong.

*Honeybees – $20*
Support farmers and healthy honeybee colonies with this buzz-worthy gift. Honeybees provide honey to eat, beeswax that allows a farmer to start a small business, and a boost to crop growth by pollinating plants everywhere they go.

*Chicks – $10*
Help a family spread their wings. Eggs not only provide an ongoing supply of protein-rich meals – they can also help start a small business and generate a steady source of income.

**Look for an order form with instructions in the bulletin each week during Advent.**

ELCA Good Gifts is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love. Saron Outreach

## CELEBRATIONS

15 years!
Where has the time flown?
Thank you for celebrating
with me the joy
of leading, and serving with,
all of you at Saron for
these 15 years! It is an honor
and privilege to be with you
as we look not only at
what has been
but what is yet to come!

**Ruth Ball is turning 100!**
Ruth plans to attend the 11am worship on **November 20**. We will celebrate with a coffee hour in her honor after worship. Join us!

FORTIFY & fly

As you may have noticed, we refuse to rush into things. You entrusted us with your financial gifts and we honor that decision by putting the appropriate time and research into projects before moving forward. Towards that end, Pastor Travis Wilson, a member of the Synod Disability Task Force, is coming this week to evaluate our building and consult on potential improvement plans. Visually impaired himself, he can provide invaluable advice on accessibility in our sanctuary. Our goal is to be more inclusive at all levels, including making it easier for those with mobility or visual impairments to preach or serve as worship assistants.

At the end of September 2022, we had collected an additional $170 for a total of $377,096 towards our pledge total of $367,205. If you still have a pledge to fulfill or simply wish to continue giving, we will gratefully accept your gift. Thank you for being with us on this journey!

# Worship

### PRAYER GROUP

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

### ALTAR FLOWERS

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks can be payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Thank you for beautifying our worship space! Please take them home after the 2nd service to enjoy. **Simply return the vase to Saron.**

Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan.

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

### ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am as long as there is interest. The link remains the same each week and is sent out on Tuesdays.

### FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

**SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS**

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

**November 6: All Saints Sunday**
Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18
Psalm 149
Ephesians 1:11-23
Luke 6:20-31

**November 13: Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost**
Malachi 4:1-2
Psalm 98
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13
Luke 21:5-19

**November 20: Christ the King Sunday**
Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm 46
Colossians 1:11-20
Luke 23:33-43

**November 27: First Sunday of Advent**
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

Our youth group (grades 6-12) joined in the *God's Work. Our Hands*. service project at the Boys & Girls Club in Benton Harbor on October 9th. Brooke, Mia and Alaina spent hours taking everything out of sheds, throwing out unusable items, and organizing what was left. And they did it all with a smile on their faces! At least, when the camera was around…

**For our next gathering, we are planning to meet for raking and blowing at two local homes that could use our help with Fall cleanup.** Timeframe is 2-3 hours. Adults from church will be going as well. We will send out a call for volunteers when we have a date. Your help would be most appreciated. Hope to see you soon!

**Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.**

# Learning

*Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.*

**SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR**

We offer a time of age-appropriate study between the two services (9:40am-10:30am):

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

**NEW WEDNESDAY EVENING FORUM & FELLOWSHIP**

We've gotten off to a good start but people are always welcome to jump in/out as your schedule and interest in the topic dictates. We are currently discussing refugees and immigrants. The Bible has multiple references about caring for the stranger, the alien among us. How does this play out in our modern world?

**Forum & Fellowship meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7pm.**
Ed Staude facilitates this group.
All are welcome!

**TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY**

We continue to work through a 12-week study of the Israelites as they cross into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua (study sponsored by The Gospel Coalition). **We meet Tuesday evenings at 6pm in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. All are welcome!**

**Week 8: Nov 1** - Putting Down Roots, Receiving God's Inheritance (Joshua 13:1–19:51)
**Week 9: Nov 8** - Cities for Justice, People for Worship (Joshua 20:1–21:45)
**Week 10: Nov 15** - An Altar of Remembrance, an Unforgettable Altercation (Joshua 22:1–34)
**Week 11: Nov 22** - Joshua Dies in the Land, the Promise of Rest Lives On (Joshua 23:1–24:33)
**Week 12: Nov 23** - Summary and Conclusion
**Nov 29** - Advent Break Begins

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
**Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)**
**Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)**

**THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

We are continuing to work through *Acts: Catching up with the Spirit* by Matt Skinner. In this study, led by Pastor Joan, "*Skinner explores six key themes that illustrate the ways in which reading Acts is capable of igniting our imagination about the character of the Christian message, the work of God's people (the church), and the challenges of living faithfully in a complex and changing world*.*

**We meet Thursday mornings in the lounge from 9:30am-11am**. Contact Pastor Joan if you have any questions. This class is open to all interested in attending. You are welcome to join anytime, for one session or many.

*from the website

Join us on November 6th at 6:30pm in the upstairs lounge. We will be talking about "One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot" by Marianne Cronin. 17-year-old Lenni and 83-year-old Margot meet at a hospital's arts and crafts class. Between them they have 100 years of life. How they plan to mark those 100 years tells the stories of love and loss, courage and kindness, tenderness and pure joy.

December 4th will find us discussing the many facets of the novel "Still Life" by Sarah Winman. A big-hearted, captivating story of people brought together by love, war, art, flood and the ghost of E.M. Forster. A portrait of people who come together to make a family and love in all its forms. We can guarantee many shared ideas and opinions about both books. We welcome all to participate. An email with the Zoom information will be sent out to anyone expressing an interest in joining this group. If you wish to be included, please contact Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.

*"We read in bed because reading is halfway between life and dreaming."* -Anna Quindlen

# Women of the ELCA

**SARON CHURCH WOMEN**

Saron Church Women will meet on **Wednesday, November 9 at 7pm, on-location in the church lounge, for the Annual Meeting**. Business matters will be discussed and voted upon. Thankoffering, as well as the other usual offerings, will be collected. Denise will provide Zoom. That link will be emailed close to the meeting date. All women of Saron are welcome to attend.

# Hospitality

**SUNDAY SNACKS**

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

# Outreach

Lutheran World Relief

**Saron Church Women** thanks everyone who contributed items for Lutheran World Relief. The total was 55 personal care kits and 7 fabric kits. The shipping donation totaled $185. Thanks to Colleen Lundgren, Frieda Williams and Melanie McCammon for boxing up the kits. Thanks also to Mary and Bob Kynast for transporting everything to the collection site in Portage. All donations are greatly appreciated and will be used by many people in need. Thanks, again, for supporting this effort!

**NOISY OFFERING**

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.
Thank you for your generous offerings!

# **God's work.** Our hands.

When at first you don't succeed, try again! After being forced to cancel in September, we rescheduled the outdoor work at the **Boys & Girls Club in Benton Harbor to Sunday, October 9.** We served our volunteers a quick lunch after worship and deployed them for an afternoon of shed decluttering and reorganizing. There were items the organization didn't even know they had and at least one shed they couldn't previously walk in. Uber thanks to all who were involved! You made a real difference here.

## BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

*Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.* - Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On September 22, Saron members Mary Kynast, Merrily Smith, Sue Bailey, Wendy King, Bob Kynast and Pastor Joan were very busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen, preparing 60 lunches. Due to some unforeseen circumstances they were able (out of necessity) to prepare the meal in 20 minutes! Great job, group!! Guests enjoyed a ham dinner, including potato salad, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread, and homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Kathi Anserello and Pat Breyen.

**If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.**

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
*Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

## INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

**As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.**

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

**LITTLE HAPPY NOTE:** United Through Motherhood informed us we collected 1,831 diapers, 846 wipes and two tubes of ointment in September. They were able to purchase additional diapers in needed sizes with a donated gift card.

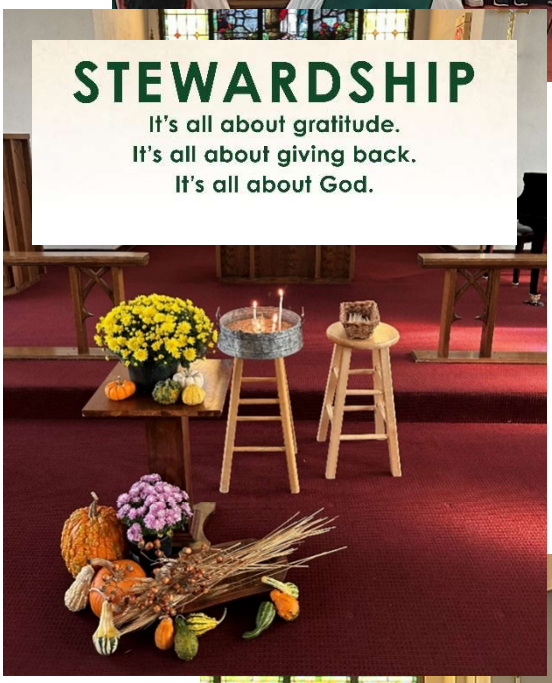
# Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

## Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

**FALL STEWARDSHIP UPDATE**




## CONNECTING WITH GOD

We've had so many inspirational moments – listening to speakers, the music, the prayer vigil, the weekly emails with topical devotions, the question of the week… We've been asked to look all around us, and inside of ourselves, to find the ways we're Connecting with God. **On November 6, it's time to bring our gifts forward and celebrate!**

We hope the end of this stewardship journey is just the beginning of a new chapter in your larger spiritual journey!

**STOCK DONATIONS**

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

## Facilities

**HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)**

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER**

# NOVEMBER 2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **1**<br>6pm Bible Study | **2**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee<br>7pm Forum & Fellowship Group | **3**<br>9:30am Bible Study<br>6pm Bells Rehearsal<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal | **4** | **5**<br> |
| **6**<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning Hour<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option<br>**Celebration Sunday!** | **7**<br>11am Prayer Group | **8**<br>6pm Bible Study | **9**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee<br>7pm Deborah Circle | **10**<br>9:30am Bible Study<br>6pm Bells Rehearsal<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal<br>Pastor on Vacation → | **11** → | **12** → |
| **13**<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning Hour<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option → | **14**<br>11am Prayer Group → | **15**<br>6pm Bible Study<br>8pm Support Meeting → | **16**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee<br>7pm Forum & Fellowship Group | **17**<br>9:30am Bible Study<br>6pm Bells Rehearsal<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal<br>**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE** | **18** | **19** |
| **20**<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning Hour<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **21**<br>11am Prayer Group<br>7pm Council Meeting | **22**<br>6pm Bible Study<br>**7pm THANKSGIVING WORSHIP** | **23**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee | **24**<br>**Happy Thanksgiving!** | **25** | **26** |
| **27**<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning Hour<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **28**<br>11am Prayer Group | **29**<br>6pm Bible Study | **30**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee<br>6pm Advent Supper<br>7pm Advent Worship | | | |